5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938,1961-1962) 1964
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administration came the introduction of the Pedi idea that a man has a claim to both the cattle and the children in the case of malicious desertion. Old men in the 1930's called this a white man's law; today people are claiming it as a Lobedu custom. Only two of the oldest men at court were able to tell me in 1962 what had been common knowledge in 1936. The present custom is for the husband on receiving back the bride-price to return some of it (one beast for each child or sometimes two for a girl) for the rearing of the younger children that remain temporarily with their mother. A father's hold over such children is in practice tenuous though the court will always uphold his claims.

The issues in divorce are rarely simple. The simplest case I came across was one in which a man became insane. His wife left with her children to live with her brother who returned the bride-price. Usually, however, there are endless complications and cases continue for months, even years. If, for example, a man chases his wife and children away and the wife wants to return, he may in the end lose both the children and the bride-price despite the proverb quoted above.

The Domestic Group and the Importance of the 'House'

We have discussed the role of property in establishing and maintaining marriage relationships and links between families. Control over material resources also plays an important part in the structure of the polygynous domestic group with its economically independent 'houses' so characteristic of the Lobedu.

As head of the family the husband has full control over all family resources. Yet each wife forms with her children a unit of production and consumption, the independence of which as against other 'houses' has to be respected even by the husband, whose control thus becomes limited the moment he marries a second wife. This is why a Christian woman among the Lobedu never has the economic independence that a woman in a polygynous household has. There are safeguards against the infringement of the principle of the independence of the 'house', as we shall see.

Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lobedu